IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE, ANDHRA PRADESH AT HYDERABAD
(Special Original Jurisdiction)

THURSDAY, THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER TWO THOUSAND AND FOUR

PRESENT
THE HON'BLE MS JUSTICE G.ROHINI
WRIT PETITION NO : 13181 of 2004

Between:

Satya Sai Mahila Shakti Sangham (DWCRA) Represented by its Secretary, Smt. Gudala Laxmi, W/o. Sri Govind Rao, aged about 23 years,
Occ : Business, R/o. of Yendagandi Village,
K. Gangavaram Mandal, East Godavari District.

..... PETITIONER

AND

1 The Andhra Pradesh State Civil Suplies Corporation, Kakinada rep by its Managing Director, Civil Supplies Bhavan, Somajiguda, Hyderabad.
2 The District Manager, A.P. Civil Supplies Corporation, Kakinada.
3 The District Collector, East Godavari District.
4 The Sub-Collector, Rajahmundry, East Godavari District.
5 Mandal Revenue Officer, Bamarru, Pamaru Mandal, Yendagandi Village,
East Godavari District.

.....RESPONDENTS

Petition under Article 226 of the constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the Affidavit filed herein the High Court will be pleased to issue a writ, order or direction, more particularly one in the nature of Writ of Mandamus by a) Declare the action of the respondents in not releasing the stocks in favour of the petitioner's Fair Price Shop No.3 of Yendagandi Village, K. Gangavaram Mandal, East Godavari District as arbitrary, illegal and violative of Articles 14 and 19(1)(g) of the Constitution of India b) Direct the respondents to release the stocks in favour of the petitioner's Fair Price Shop No.3 of Yendagandi Village, K. Gangavaram Mandal, East Godavari District forthwith.

Counsel for the Petitioner : MR.ABHINAND KUMAR SHAVILI

Counsel for the Respondents : GP FOR CIVIL SUPPLIES

The Court made the following :

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THE HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE G.ROHINI

WRIT PETITION NO.13181 OF 2004

ORAL ORDER :

The petitioner is an authorized dealer of a fair price shop. According to the petitioner, the authroisation issued in its favour is subsisting and the same is neither suspended nor cancelled as on today. It is alleged that in spite of the fact that the authorization is subsisting, the respondents failed to supply the essential commodities for distribution to the cardholders. Hence, this writ petition challenging the alleged action of the respondents in not supplying the essential commodities for distribution to the cardholders.

I have heard the learned Counsel for the petitioner and the learned Government Pleader for Civil Supplies appearing for the respondents.

Even assuming that the proceedings under Section 6-A of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 or any other enquiry with regard to the alleged irregularities in distribution of the essential commodities are pending against the dealer, the question is whether the authorities can refuse to supply the essential commodities to the dealer without either suspending or cancelling the authorization.

This issue has been considered by a Full Bench of this Court in OLETI TIRUPATHAMMA v. DISTRICT SUPPLY OFFICER (CITY),

VISAKHAPATNAM AND OTHERS[1] and while concluding that in such circumstances the proceedings under Article 226 of the Constitution of India are maintainable, it has been held as under :

"The High Court while exercising its jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, acts sentinel qui vive and thus it has to protect the citizen from arbitrary and capricious action of the executive. If the licensing authority themselves upon application of mind come to the conclusion that the irregularities committed by the fair price shop dealer would warrant suspension of his licence, it may do so. But, in our considered opinion, the authority without taking recourse to the said action, cannot, refuse to supply the essential commodities."

In the light of the ratio laid down by the Full Bench in the above decision, the Writ Petition is disposed of with a direction to the respondents to supply the essential commodities to the petitioner in case the petitioner is holding a valid authorization and the same is neither suspended nor cancelled as on today. It is made clear that this shall not preclude the respondents to initiate appropriate proceedings against the petitioner if the circumstances so warrant, following due process of law.

Writ Petition is accordingly disposed of. No costs.

16th September, 2004.

Gbs

To

1 The Managing Director, Andhra Pradesh State Civil Suplies Corporation, Kakinada , Civil Supplies Bhavan, Somajiguda, Hyderabad.

2 The District Manager, A.P. Civil Supplies Corporation, Kakinada.

3 The District Collector, East Godavari District.

4 The Sub-Collector, Rajahmundry, East Godavari District.

5 Mandal Revenue Officer, Bamarru, Pamaru Mandal, Yendagandi Village,
East Godavari District.

6. Two CCs to G.P. for Civil Supplies, High Court of A.P. Bldgs, Hyderabad.(OUT)

7. Two CD copies.

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[1] 2002 (1) ALT 577 (FB)